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ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT

Regiopolis College,

ON THE

EVE OF THE ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

REV. ANGUS McDONELL,

V. G. OF KINGSTON,

BY ARCHIBALD MACKINNON.

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THE STUART DYNASTY.

Address delivered on the Eve of the Anniversary of the REV. ANGUS McDONELL, V. G. of Kingston, by ARCHIBALD MACKINNON, at Regiopolis College, in 1861.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

It is not without a grateful sense of the pleasing duty that has devolved upon me that I rise on this occasion.

To acknowledge one's gratitude to his benefactor, is certainly in unison with the feelings of the individual benefitted. But, when in addition to this, there is questions of evincing our appreciation of worth, of paying a tribute of respect to merit, it is with no ordinary pleasure I appear before you to take a part in the celebration of this eve.

There are many subjects, of which it would be interesting to treat; but considering the occasion, considering whose feast we celebrate, it will not I trust, be uninteresting to offer a few remarks on what is known in history as the Stuart Dynasty. To those whose pride it is to be of the same race, to the sons of old Scotland, the very name is endeared by many a social tie, by many a pleasing recollection of the past -- That it conveys to others a similar gratification,

mingled with many like reminiscences, I cannot but feel conscious ; for I know that if to-night I appear not before Scotchmen, I yet appear before those who claim a common origin, before those in whose veins flow nought but Celtic blood, and whose sires fought, bled and died on many a gory field in defence of their rights.

But before proceeding to trace their history, it may be well to take a retrospective view of the country up to the time when the Stuart first ascended the Scottish throne.

Of Scotland, previous to the Roman invasion, we know little or nothing, with real certainty.—The legends of its bards, our only records of information, are so confused and contradictory as to give us only a faint idea of it. That it was first peopled from Gaul is now no longer a subject of dispute. But when or at what period can only be conjectured. Some suppose it to have been colonized a thousand years before the Christian Era ; others at a later period. Certain it is, however, that when Cæsar landed on the shores of Britain he found the country thickly populated, and everything indicative of an early colonization. Its internal condition at this period was like that of all early nations, when an enemy is to be repelled, or national liberty to be defended. But it was not until the Romans had abandoned the Island, that it became susceptible of a general form of government. Justly proud of having repelled the invader, of having protected their dominions against the conquerors of the

world, the various clans of which the population was composed, began gradually to unite, and to become known by the common name of Scots — The Picts and Scots, however, the two most powerful tribes, were not properly organized into one people until Kenneth the Second ascended the Pictish throne in 842.

By wise and prudential measures, by an honest policy and impartial attention to the affairs of both parties, he succeeded in obtaining a reconciliation of their interests, and in laying the political foundation of a kingdom, which, while its sons have been contesting the palm of pre-eminence, thro' various vicissitudes of fortune, has withstood the withering blasts of time, survived the blighting influences of civil commotion and triumphed over the intrigues of foreign, crafty and ambitious princes.

From this period, down to the year 1284, the throne was occupied by a line of Kings, remarkable for prudence, energy and skill in the administration of justice. Their wise and salutary laws tended greatly to ameliorate the condition of the country, in directing the attention of its nobles from war to the more congenial pursuits of literature, in facilitating commerce and promoting the general welfare and happiness of their subjects.

But, amidst this general prosperity, unforeseen calamities were impending. For shortly after the demise of Alexander III, the throne became vacant in consequence of the death of his only daughter, commonly styled the Maid of Norway,

whence arose the famous dispute of Baliol and Bruce for the crown ; and hence too that mighty struggle between them and the Edwards, between the Scottish and English nations, a struggle unprecedented in the annals of war, a struggle which the world beheld with astonishment and fear.— Astonishment on the one hand at the dishonest, the deceitful policy of the Edwards in attempting at a moment when a country was disorganized by internal troubles—that which they dare not even presume in her tranquillity. Fear on the other, lest that brave, that gallant people would yield to the foe, that which by their valor they had defended for ages before. But their fear was groundless. For in the moment of danger, when the spirit of freedom seemed to droop, to sink, to rise no more, arose the heroic, the immortal Wallace, who with his patriot bands, on many a well fought field, proved to the world that what the Roman, the Dane and Norwegian could not effect 'twas folly for the Saxon to attempt. His efforts were crowned with success, and were sealed by the patriot Bruce on the glorious field of Bannockburn.— Thus terminated this famous contest, of all others the most decisive in its issue, the most beneficial in its results. Throughout the whole range of history there is not perhaps another on which the generous lover of freedom so delights to dwell—the true patriot to contemplate. To Scotchmen there certainly is none ; none so pleasing, none so gratifying to their desires. Many glorious periods there are in their country's history.— Many struggles recorded on which they can look

back with pride. But to this one they can point with enthusiasm, as to one in which were exhibited the noblest patriotism, the most undying fervor and disinterested zeal in the cause of liberty, virtue and justice, the world ever did or can behold. Yes, gentlemen, and so long as merit will be esteemed, so long as valour and patriotism will command the admiration of mankind, so long will an ever grateful remembrance of it be cherished by them, be handed down as a precious legacy to their descendants, as a consolation to them in their adversity, a source of joy in their prosperity, and an incentive to guard, protect and defend the liberties of their native land as their fathers did of old, against proud England's mighty hosts. Years had now rolled by. War was at an end, and the sword was sheathed. Those who fought in the cause of freedom, in the defence of the liberty of their country, were now mingled with the silent dead, and peace shed her genial rays o'er their honored graves. A new generation had arisen, who gloried in the successful struggle of their ancestors, and cherished the remembrance of their deeds. The country itself was fast recruiting from the disasters of former years; though its prosperity was somewhat retarded by occasional reverses of fortune during the reign of David II; when at length, in 1371, Robert Stuart ascended the throne, and was the first of that long, that illustrious line of sovereigns, of which we are to treat, and which terminated only in 1714. For three and a half centuries the Stuarts reigned over Scotland, and they ruled

England during 111 years. Connected with their dynasty are many of the most important events of Scottish and English history, for it was during their career that most of those political and religious changes were effected, which continue to act upon the social, moral and political condition of both countries down to the present day.

But in tracing their history this evening we can only dwell on a few of the most remarkable events that characterize their respective reigns.

Robert, on his ascension to the throne, directed his attention to the better administration of the government of the country. For though he found it in a state of comparative tranquillity, prudent but energetic measures were yet necessary to repress crime, to promote industry and preserve peace. His endeavors, however, did not meet with all the success he wished being partly thwarted by the contentions of the nobility.—The reign of Robert the Third was in like manner unproductive of any important event; for from the moment he ascended the throne till his death, which occurred in 1401, his whole life was so embittered by the intrigues of the nobility, as to leave him little or no time to give to the consideration of his Kingdom's more immediate interests. With the Jameses, however, things began to alter. From the accession of the first James, to the death of James the Fifth, many important innovations were made in civil discipline. They were sovereigns possessed of many virtues, and endowed with great mental qualities, especially

James the First, who was not only one of the wisest sovereigns that ever swayed the Scottish sceptre, but one possessed of all the accomplishments and acquirements that rendered him the greatest scholar and intellectual genius of his age. Under them literature was patronised, commerce extended, and manufactures improved. But war, war the great curse of mankind, was the bane of their country's happiness, and at intervals not only retarded her prosperity, but deluged her with blood.

It was thus with the Jameses, many of whom in their wars with England met with an untimely end—a fate peculiar to their dynasty. And thus too were added to other evils, that of their being succeeded by mere infants, during whose minority the greatest disorders prevailed in the state. It was so at the death of James the Fifth, who was succeeded by the young, the beautiful, the virtuous and heroic Mary Stuart, whose trials and sufferings, whose imprisonment and death by Elizabeth awaken in the hearts of all honest men, admiration for her virtues, sympathy for her misfortunes, and a well-merited contempt for the blood-stained ruffians and insatiable monsters, who with more than fiendish cruelty, deprived her of her rights and her life.

The internal troubles of the kingdom at this period were not only increased but prolonged by the followers of Presbyterianism, which first began to dawn in the reign of James the Fifth. Introduced by the notorious John Knox, its

establishment was marked by all the rapacity, by all the bloodshed, the robberies and murders essentially attendant on the introduction and establishment of all erroneous doctrines. It not only at the time blighted the happiness of the inhabitants, retarded their advancement, socially and morally, but brutalized its votaries, goaded them on to acts of violence and deluged the country with innocent blood. With the reign of James the Sixth troubles began to subside and peace to resume her wanted sway. Being a prince endowed with many eminent qualities, averse to war, and naturally inclined to peace, he took advantage of the means at his disposal to allay strife, to reconcile differences and preserve tranquillity. His efforts met with considerable success, and were strengthened by his accession to the English throne in 16th 3, an event which not only tended to calm internal discord, but to gratify among his countrymen that old, that ancestral pride which seemed to slumber in their bosoms during civil contentions. The glory of their country was increased. They now gave Kings to their ancient enemy. Their inveterate foe they ruled. That foe against which they stood for ages in open hostility ; that foe against which they contended on many a crimsoned field ; that foe on which they avenged the fall of their sires, and drenched the remembrance of their wrongs in the blood of its sons. With that foe they were now at peace, and their interests imperceptibly became identical.

A new era seemed to dawn. Tranquillity every where prevailed, and the minds of the

people so long distracted by religious fanaticism began gradually to calm, until James, conceiving the idea of uniting the legislatures of the two kingdoms, attempted to overthrow Presbyterianism and to establish Episcopacy in its room.

Enraged at these proceedings, they immediately assumed an attitude of self-defense and of opposition to every invasion of their rights. This premature design of effecting a union, however desirable in itself, kindled the flame of a civil war, which with little intermission continued to ruin, more or less, both countries down to the reign of Queen Ann. But the efforts of James proving ineffectual, were continued with unabated vigor by his son and successor, Charles the First, who by being too desirous of carrying into execution the designs of his predecessor, too intent on uniformity in religious matters, and kept ignorant by his ministers till too late of the real temper of his subjects, caused his own destruction.

His execution presents a sad, a gloomy spectacle to our view, rendered more melancholy by his own pleadings and aspirations for justice at the hands of his merciless murderers. But they were all too late, all in vain. And Covenanters, branded as they have been for resistance against regal encroachments in the religious domain, have been unceasingly reproached by modern lip loyalists with his lamentable fate. Their opposition, it is true, may have been carried too far. They may have been guilty of ungenerosity in the excitement of the moment; but the candid historian and

impartial critic will make allowance for their religious fervor, will justify their proceedings so long as confined within legitimate limits, and extol their manly, their strenuous opposition to the arrogant assumptions of monarchical prescription.

At this time arose the famous Oliver Cromwell, who by hastening the King's death in England, succeeded in obtaining command of the Government.

His wars against Charles the First, his treachery, and the cruelties he inflicted on the loyal inhabitants of Ireland, who ever proved true to the cause of the Stuart, have only a parallel in the bloody career of the notorious Prince Billy, the butcherer of Glencoe.

The troubles in both kingdoms at this period affords but too trae an exemplification of the evils, the misery, and wretchedness which every-where obtain pre-eminence during civil contentions.

And if on the one hand the mind may be delighted in beholding the chivalry, the bravery of a Montrose, and the great, the manly sentiments that actuated the followers of the Royal cause, it has on the other hand to shudder at the contemplation of the evils and the misery which every where prevailed, the cruelties, the barbarity evinced by Cromwell and his crew, and the almost complete destruction of the elements of all social law and order.

The reign of Charles the Second placed a temporary check on existing ills. But no sooner had James the Seventh evinced a desire to annul the tyranical restrictions which circumstances compelled some of his predecessors to sanction, than the flame of civil war and bigotry were again kindled, which was carefully fanned by the friends of William, Prince of Orange, who finally dispossessed him of his throne, and blasted his hopes forever in the fatal battle of the Boyne. The policy of the usurper, characterized though it was by all that was worthy of the holy, the immaculate patron of Orangism, served little to tranquillize the public spirit in either country. While his fiendish cruelties to the inhabitants of Ireland, his treachery and violation of all law and honor, enkindled in their bosoms that indignation which afterwards so steeled the Irish heart, and nerved the Irish arm on the crimsoned plains of Fontenoy. His power in Britain itself was more than threatened by the followers of James, styled Jacobites, on account of their firm adhesion to his cause.

But it ceased in 1702. And on his death Anne, the only surviving daughter of James was hailed Sovereign.

Her reign forms a glorious era in the history of both countries, and contrasts favorably with the ablest of her successors in intellectual development, commercial enterprise and successful feats of arms. For the genius of Pope, Swift, Addison, Steele and others, by converting the polemical style of preceding ages into a more sweet and

harmonious cadence, gave to literature many of its most delightful charms. And notwithstanding the troubles of preceding reigns, commerce had generally attracted the attention of the inhabitants, especially of Scotland, which chiefly resulted from the establishment of African and Indian Companies in 1695. While the threatened invasion of former years coupled with commercial activity, and the progressive spirit of industry, caused both nations to ascend in the scale of maritime importance. But the event which of all others was the most important, the most beneficial in its results, was the union of the legislatures of the two kingdoms; thus constituting our great, our glorious British Constitution, which, notwithstanding all its faults, has ever been the nursery of freedom, the champion of civil liberty throughout every portion of the civilized globe.

Yes, gentlemen, and though it was unpopular at the time, especially that it vested the succession in Princess Sophia and her heirs, though it met with considerable opposition from the followers of James, and may still have its secret foes, yet when we take into account the many blessings which have resulted from it, how beneficial it has proved to both nations, how it secured to each its rights, its liberty and a community of privileges; but above all, when we consider the relative condition of both kingdoms at the time, every candid mind must conclude that it was neither inconsistent with their honor, de-

structive of their ancient glory, or prejudicial to their respective interests and prosperity.

After thus seeing peace restored, industry revived, and the liberty of both countries resting on a sure, a common foundation, that liberty which they had received without stain from their ancestors, and which by their valour they had preserved intire and intact. After seeing this, and their many bloody but glorious struggles at an end, to be enshrined in the historian's page with their now more congenial contests in the fields of science, she terminated her long and glorious reign in 1714, deservedly loved and notwithstanding her faults, lamented by all.

With her the old, the venerable dynasty of the Stuarts ceased. Departed to appear no more.

Many attempts were made, especially in the Highlands to depose their Hanoverian descendants, and to restore the son and grandson of James to the throne of his ancestors ; not only in the reign of George the First, when £100,000 were offered for his head, but also during the reign of George the Second, when becoming less liberal, £30,000 were deemed sufficient.

Their efforts, however, bold and magnanimous though they were, from their want of arms and the delay of the French, on whose promises and assistance they relied, met with only a temporary success, till in the end the last hopes of the brave, the gallant, and chivalrous Prince Charles were blighted forever on the gory field of Culloden.

The subsequent trials he underwent, the dangers he encountered and the sufferings he endured, cannot fail to excite to-day, even in the hearts of his enemies, sympathy and sorrow. Hunted like the bounding roe of his native land, o'er hill and dale ; pursued relentlessly by his insatiable enemies from rock to cavern ; chased from shore to shore ; were we to trace the incidents of his life during his wanderings, we would have many a sorrowful tale to relate ; many a gloomy situation to depict, many an heroic exploit to recount, while the great, the manly sentiments, that actuated the sons of the mountains in his cause, who scorned the bribe to reveal to his enemies his last lurking abode, would no less command our admiration, than the disastrous termination of their noble, their high-souled daring in his behalf awaken our deepest sentiments of sorrow.

But to return to their career. If we trace the history of the dynasties who swayed the destinies of the various kingdoms of Europe, we will find none perhaps whose members were more unfortunate, whose trials and sufferings more excite our sympathy, whose virtues in general more command our respect, and whose talents and literary acquirements so elicit our admiration.

Descended of those who contended for freedom with Bruce, they naturally looked back with pride to their ancient origin, and to the last upheld through all their vicissitudes of fortune, and the revolutions of succeeding ages, the dignity, the glory of their ancestry and the honor,

the independance of the country that gave them birth. Few Princes were ever placed in more embarrassing difficulties, whilst none had to contend against such adverse fortune. Nevertheless, to them Scotland owes much of her present greatness. To their strenuous efforts and wise regulations are due the foundation of the social happiness of her sons, and the origin of her present laws and literary institutions.

It is not without pride then we can revert to those days that are past, past long before modern revolutions had disorganized civil society, or religious changes with their attendant train of evils were effected, to contemplate the virtuous dispositions of the Roberts, the intellectual endowments, the political energy and military qualifications of the Jameses, and the pure virtues, the mildness, the fortitude of the lovely but ill-fated Mary Stuart, whose life was the true type of piety, of innocence, whose mind was always superior to selfish interest and ambition, and whose conduct was ever regulated by the principles of uniform rectitude and integrity.

The historian may perhaps find much to censure during this long period in civil discipline! But he invariably finds the progress of improvement, the march of civilization and refinement to be in accordance with the spirit of the times, and if occasionally retarded by National disasters, or internal discords to be speedily revived and facilitated by their fostering care.

Neither is the remainder of their dynasty less worthy our attention. For though few Princes have ever been made so much the favorite subjects of vituperation and abuse, their very many virtues and accomplishments scarcely less challenge our respect than those of their predecessors. While the momentous events connected with their respective reigns, afford ample scope for the investigation of the historian, sufficient range for the poet's wing, and sad and glaring truths for the deductions of the moralist. Yes, though petty scribblers and self-conceited lecturers, with the assumed wisdom of grave philosophers, may denounce them, may tell us that despotism was inherent in their very natures, that they were opposed to all reform, to whatever was calculated to ameliorate the condition of the respective countries over which they ruled, and to promote the general welfare and happiness of their subjects, the student of history viewing their career through the plain, the unmagnified medium of facts, and not through the concentrated vision of bigotry, finds nothing to justify the rash assumption, nothing to corroborate the silly accusation.

True, the restrictions of James the Sixth against a portion of his subjects were despotic in the extreme. True the proceedings of Charles the First were impolitic. True the political condition of both countries, down to the reign of Queen Ann, was neither prosperous nor happy. True tyranny and bloodshed, anarchy and confusion, were partially in the ascendant. True the

spirit of industry was checked, and the middle classes rose not to opulence.

But, gentlemen, what was the cause. Did the laws of James the Sixth, the acts of Charles the First produce the sad effect. Tyranical though they were, they were too fleeting to leave serious impression on the great commercial body. Did the proceedings of Charles the Second, the principles of James the Seventh exercise an influence destructive of industry and peace. History denies the charge. It was by being too liberal, too desirous of giving liberty of conscience that the latter lost his Crown, that his descendants were dispossessed of their rights, and forced to wander as fugitives on the land of their ancestors.

Whence then did it arise. From religious changes, religious frenzy and ambitious adventurers. These were the true, the real, the only causes of all the then social and political ills which no government could subdue, no concessions alleviate.

In few countries in Europe was the introduction of the Reformation attended with such disastrous results, and in none was its establishment so destructive of national harmony, so subversive of all law and order, especially in Scotland.

For whatever in the minds of its followers may have been its mediate benefits to mankind, whatever, according to them, may have been that spirit of inquiry it may have begotten in after

ages, it certainly blasted the slow but steady prosperity of both Kingdoms at the time, it overthrew the mansions of peace, crushed the stately edifices which the piety of former ages had erected, defiled innocence and desecrated the temples of the living God. Anarchy, bloodshed and murder were its immediate fruits, fanaticism the characteristic of its followers.

No sooner had its spirit calmed ; no sooner had the horrors of civil war ceased, than existing ills were increased by Cromwell and perpetuated by the bloodstained career of the adventurous King William. Herein, gentlemen, we find the true source of all their evils. Herein we find the real, the only cause of their misfortunes, and not in the despotism of the Stuarts, who notwithstanding the fanaticism, notwithstanding the civil wars, notwithstanding the revolutions which darken a portion of their career, and in the end blighted their prospects forever, were always desirous of the happiness of their subjects, the prosperity of their native land ; however tyranical some of their political acts, however misdirected some of their political proceedings. Industry it is true, was checked during a portion of their career, but it increased with the extinction of sectarian envy and religious fanaticism. And if their period was productive of many evils, it was not barren in beneficial results. No, it was during their career that most of those social and political changes were effected which continue to act upon the interests of both countries, and effect their condition even at the present hour. For if

we trace their progress in the path of fame, if we examine the secret means by which both countries have attained to their present proud eminence in the commercial and political world, we will find that it was during the now long extinguished dynasty of the Stuarts, that the germ was deposited, the nucleus established of their present power and glory.

This neither the slanderer can disavow—the bigot ignore. Prejudice may asperse them now they are gone, but an honest admiration of their virtues, and their merits, a sincere conviction of their noble desires and patriotic sentiments, however dimmed by their imprudence or blighted by their misfortunes will go down to future generations unimpaired by all the denunciations of perverted intellects or the freaks of distorted imaginations.

Yes, gentlemen, of this we have ample testimony in their history, in the records of the past. For whatever may have been their faults and their crimes, whatever may have been their political errors and their individual failings, few Princes were ever so endeared to, so beloved by their race. It was this attachment to their cause, this firm adherence, this unmatched loyalty that cost their country the blood of her bravest sons, that led thousands of them to wander on foreign shores, to lonely graves in far distant lands. The same spirit that animated them in the past yet survives in all its native and youthful prime. But the fond objects of it alas ! are now no more, They have perished. They are gone.

A century and more has elapsed since their last hopes were blighted on Culloden's red plain
A century and more has elapsed since £30,000 were offered to the gallant Highlanders to reveal the last refuge of their chivalrous Prince. A century and more has elapsed since they beheld him a fugitive on the mountain side, a lonely wanderer 'mid their cloud-capt hills and silent vales. A century and more has elapsed since they beheld him fatigued, emaciated and worn with disease. A century and more has elapsed since they relieved him famishing of hunger, and clothed him perishing of cold. A century and more has elapsed and Scotland has since risen to power and glory, the genius of her sons has elevated her to a proud eminence among the nations of the earth, she flourishes under a noble, a virtuous and generous Hanover; but the trials, the sufferings, the wrongs, the persecution of the Stuart she has not yet forgotten.

No, though they are now no more they still live. Their fame survives the subversion of dynasties, the fall of thrones, the destruction of kingdoms and the wreck of Empires. They yet live in the country that gave them birth, in the memory of her sons, in the brightest pages of her literature, in the soul-thrilling melody, the delightful fancy and enchanting beauties of her Burns, her Campbells and her Scots. Their plaintive notes, sweetened by the calm, the tender melody of their melancholy muse have but strengthened that native born feeling for them in the hearts of their countrymen, who, while

they draw a darkening veil over their defects, yet love to look back through the misty ages of the past, to those early days when their fair fame was as yet unsullied by a tyranical act. Yet love to look back, to cast a sad, a sorrowful glance on the trials, the sufferings, the struggles of the last of their race, and when his fond hopes were fading away, when his star was becoming obscured by the passing clouds of adversity, to contemplate that stern, that noble, that manly independence, which, while it reflects a lustre on their exiled name, adds to their country's glory and their country's fame.

Yes, gentlemen, their very faults, their crimes, their trials, their sufferings, their wrongs, their persecutions, their virtues and their merits all add to the interesting associations of their native land, to the traditional legends, the songs, the ballads, the romantic beauties and glorious reminiscences of the last unconquered stronghold of the Celt, who whether amid the roar of cannon or the din of battle, whether an inhabitant of the frozen North, or a wanderer o'er Afric's burning sands, whether amid the perfumes of sunny climes, or in his own sweet, tranquil glen, among his own loved native hills, yet cherishes in his bosom that which time cannot lessen, prosperity, misery or affliction impair—a grateful remembrance for the once powerful but unfortunate STUART.

